

Ega language

Ega, also known as **Egwa** and **Diés**, is a West African language spoken in south-central Ivory Coast. It is of uncertain affiliation and has variously been classified as Kwa or an independent branch of Niger-Congo.

Ega has the full noun class system for which the Bantu languages are known.

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Demographics

Ega is spoken in 21 villages near Gly in Diés Canton, Gôh-Djiboua District, Ivory Coast (Bole-Richard 1983: 359).^[3] Some villages are Broudougou, Gly, Dairo, Didizo, and Douzaroko.^[4]

The Ega people are increasing in number, though some are shifting to Dida through intermarriage.

Classification

Ega is possibly a divergent Western Kwa language within the Niger–Congo language family spoken in Ivory Coast. It does not appear to belong to any of the traditional branches of Niger–Congo. Though traditionally assumed to be one of the Kwa languages, Roger Blench (2004) conservatively classified it as a separate branch of the Atlantic–Congo family, pending a demonstration that it is actually related to the Kwa or Volta–Niger languages. However, Blench (2017) classified Ega as a fully Western Kwa language that has borrowed from Kru, Gur, and Mande.^[4]

Phonology

Ega has twenty-seven consonants. Its stops have a three-way contrast between voiceless, voiced, and implosive.

	Ega
Native to	Ivory Coast
Region	near Gly or Gli, Sud-Bandama region
Native speakers	2,500 (2001) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Niger–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Atlantic–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kwa?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ega</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	ega
Glottolog	egaa1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/egaa1242) ^[2]

Consonant phonemes^[5]

		Labial	Alveolar	Dorsal		
				front	plain	labial
Nasal		<u>m</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>ɲ</u>	<u>ŋ</u>	
Plosive/ Affricate	implosive	<u>ɓ</u>	<u>ɗ</u>	<u>ɟ</u>	<u>ɠ</u>	<u>ɠɓ</u>
	voiced	<u>b</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>ɗ</u>	<u>ɡ</u>	<u>ɡb</u>
	voiceless	<u>p</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>kp</u>
Fricative	voiced	<u>v</u>	<u>z</u>			
	voiceless	<u>f</u>	<u>s</u>		<u>x</u>	
Approximant			<u>l</u>	<u>j</u>		<u>w</u>

There are nine vowels, with ATR contrast: /ɪ/, /ɪ̄/, /ʊ/, /ʊ̄/, /ɛ/, /ɛ̄/, /ɔ/, /ɔ̄/, and /a/.

There are three tones: high, mid, and low.

References

1. Ega (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/ega/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
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 3. Bole-Richard, R. 1983a. Ega. In: *Atlas des langues Kwa de Côte d'Ivoire*, Vol 1. ed. G. Herault. 359-401. Abidjan: ILA.
 4. Blench, Roger. 2017. *The Ega language of Cote d'Ivoire: how can it be classified?* (https://www.academia.edu/33800011/The_Ega_language_of_Cote_dIvoire_how_can_it_be_classified)
 5. Connell, Bruce and Ahoua, Firmin and Gibbon, Dafydd. 2002. Illustrations of the IPA: Ega. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 32. 99–104. Cambridge University Press.
- Blench, Roger. 2004. *The Ega Language of Côte d'Ivoire: Etymologies and Implications for Classification* (<http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/Kwa/Ega%20data.pdf>).

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